

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## Granny Wale Notes

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"Granuaile" is symbolic name for Ireland derived from the Gaelic spelling of the name of a female Irish pirate of the last half of the 16th century, Grace O'Malley. D. K. Wilgus in an article "The Aisling and the Cowboy", <<Western Folklore>>, 44, pp. 275-6 (1985) quotes a few other spellings of the title and gives a list of several "Granuaile" songs, but the tune given here seems to be the only one traceable to the 18th century.

"Grania Meuel" is cited as the tune for a two verse song in <<Songs in Jack the Gyant Queller>>, Dublin, 1749, from Henry Brooke's suppressed Irish ballad opera of 1748. The song there fits the tune given here. This is the earliest reference to the tune that I have found.

The tune "Granuaile" is given in a instrumental setting as "Granu Weal or Ma Ma Ma" in Edward Bunting's <<The Ancient Music of Ireland>>, p. 36, 1840. Bunting said, p. viii, that the tune was obtained from a piper named Macdonnell in 1797, and he thought, p. 93, that the tune was as old as Gr herself. Bunting's setting, however, is unsatisfactory as source for a vocal score. The melody part of Bunting's tune was reprinted by Francis O'Neill in <<The Music of Ireland>>, no. 546. O'Neill also gives a different tune "(Graine na Maille) Grace O'Malley," no. 485. Fortunately there are better sources for the tune.

A singable set of the tune is "Granuwail" in Hime's <<A New Selection of the most Admired Original Irish Airs>>. Dublin, c 1800. This is a modal tune. After the treble clef, B is indicated to be flatted, and it means just that and no more; this is not a key signature. Bunting's setting has a key signature of two flats (G minor), but he then puts a natural sign in front of all of the E's, so Hime's notation is correct, although it is not a modern key signature. This is not uncommon in early tune notation. In the two later copies cited below the E's are flatted, so it corresponds to the key signature, but of course, the tune is thus changed. The last four measures of Hime's twelve measure tun

Play: GRNWALE, from Hime's New Selection, c 1800.

Another copy of our tune here is "Gr inne Mhaol," reprinted from <<The Dublin Monthly Magazine>>, May, 1842, by Georges-Denis

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Zimmermann in <<Songs of Irish Rebellion>>, p. 183, 1967. The tune there is given as sixteen measures, but the last eight are simply a repeat of the first eight. This setting differs little from that published by Haverty. The earliest copy of the tune I've seen is in the Henry Beck Flute MS, 1786, in the Library of Congress, but given there as G major instead of G minor.

Granau Wale/Weal is (Mother) Ireland in a song which I think is probably American, although set in Dublin and London. "Old Granau" there complains to several English statesmen about the hard times the English are giving to her sons in America. The song mentions events in America from the Boston tea party up to, but not including, the start of the Revolutionary War. The song was printed in the very rare <<The Green Mountain Songster>> of 1823, with the first nine v song collection, <<The New Green Mountain Songster>>, (by Flanders, Ballard, Brown and Barry) 1939, reprinted 1966. For this song the title is "Old Granny Wales." A later copy, with several corruptions, is printed from the Stevens-Douglas manuscript (c 1841-56) of western New York in <<A Pioneer Songster>>, (by Harold Thompson and Edith Cutting) p. 85, 1958. In the latter the song is entitled "Old Grannau Weal." Neither copy contains a tune direction, nor do any of the editors suggest one, but the song fits our tune here quite well. I suspect the song was actually written in America by an Irish American: the writer does not seem to know the names of any real streets in Dublin or London, and even after the date of this song Irishmen were being executed for treason for less provocative acts against the English. I have decided to add this song on at the end here, as it is a good American historical ballad that I have not seen elsewhere.

WBO  
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